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ABSTRACT

One of five booklets designed to help vocational education teachers and administrators relate more effectively to handicapped students in their classrooms, this booklet suggests that the outcomes of handicapped pupils who are integrated or mainstreamed into the regular vocational education program differ only slightly from those of non-handicapped individuals. Topics discussed include the following: a brief history of the development of the right of handicapped students to an appropriate education, the Vocational Amendments of 1968, the Education for All Children Act (Public Law 94-142), Title II of Public Law 94-482 (to improve guidance in vocational education programs), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, educational responsibility, normalization and risk-taking, and a conceptual model of mainstreaming. A self-test is included for pre- and posttest evaluation. (TA)

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Mainstreaming Handicapped Students into the Regular Classroom

ED153044

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Another Step Forward...

These booklets were designed to help vocational education teachers and administrators relate more effectively to handicapped students in their classrooms. They were produced as a special project at the University of Florida. These booklets should provide you with valuable information and answer questions you may have about handling the special needs of handicapped students. For additional information, please write: Dr. Stuart E. Schwartz
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The series of five booklets covers material on a wide-range of aspects dealing with handicapped individuals. The booklets include:

1) Mainstreaming Handicapped Students into the Regular Classroom
2) Characteristics of Handicapped Students
3) Evaluation and Placement
4) A System of Management
5) Architectural Considerations for a Barrier Free Environment

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Here are a few questions to help determine what you already know about teaching handicapped students in your classes.

After reading this booklet, take the test again to evaluate your understanding of the important concepts. The correct answers are given in the back of the booklet.

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

_____ 1. Handicapped students are different and need special attention and limited exposure to normal life experiences.

_____ 2. The integration of handicapped individuals into regular education programs and society is referred to as mainstreaming.

_____ 3. The 1968 ammendment of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 earmarked ten percent of the state's vocational education funds to be spent on programming specifically for handicapped pupils.

_____ 4. Mainstreaming advocates the return of all handicapped children in special classes to regular classes.

_____ 5. A provision of the Education For All Children Act is that education be provided in the "least restrictive environment."

_____ 6. Employers may ask questions about a job applicant's handicap and may take this into consideration in hiring procedures.

_____ 7. Community involvement and concern is vital if handicapped people are to take their place in society.

_____ 8. The mainstreaming model calls for upward movement from one level to another only as far as necessary, and downward as quickly as possible.

_____ 9. Mainstreaming creates alternatives that will help teachers serve children with learning or adjustment problems in the regular setting.

_____ 10. Existing buildings don't require remodeling if they are inaccessible to handicapped people.

BLIND

The idea of mainstreaming handicapped students into the regular school program is a new one to many people. After reading this material, you should be more sensitive to the special needs of handicapped learners. You should be able to think of these students in positive terms. Handicapped students **do** create special problems and difficult situations; but teachers face challenging problems in handling normal students as well. You must understand that handicapped individuals are more like their normal peers than different from them. Regardless of the approach you use, individualized education becomes easier if handicapped children are thought of as students first. When this is done, the design of the educational program should center around sound teaching principles that aim at meeting a student's needs, whether or not they are special, regardless of a handicap.

The educational alternatives in the school system should be broad enough to deliver the best possible education to all students, whatever their needs. We realize it would be impossible for every teacher to meet all the special needs, but changes can be made so a greater number of handicapped students get the most appropriate education possible by interacting with normal students in the regular classroom.

A Brief History

The right of handicapped students to an appropriate education has not always existed. For centuries, people with handicaps had no rights at all. Fortunately the treatment of handicapped individuals has improved significantly through the years.

Early civilizations developed militaristic societies where handicapped people were considered a burden. Only the strongest individuals survived; the others were abandoned and left to die.

In the middle ages the attitude changed from one of neglect to one of ridicule. Handicapped people were considered inferior in every way, and were regarded as oddities

or freaks. Their only apparent value was to perform as clowns and jesters for the entertainment of those more fortunate. Their roles as entertainers earned them food and shelter but did little else to help their situation.

Gradually society's views on the worth of handicapped people improved. The new public attitude caused changes, but not beneficial ones. Because of their handicaps, afflicted people were put away in asylums and monasteries for care and protection. Being locked away from the rest of society only reinforced their feelings of helplessness and their image as burdens.

The Industrial Revolution brought the first efforts towards training handicapped persons because of the growing need for skilled laborers to work in the newly developing industries.

The greatest step in improving conditions for handicapped people came after the World Wars. Thousands of injured war veterans returned home, increasing the handicapped population and bringing a new awareness to the issue of integrating handicapped people into society. A different perspective emerged as society realized that handicapped persons could hold jobs and succeed well at them. Handicapped men were anxious to return to the jobs they held before the war, refusing to be held back by an impairment. Since then, training and instruction for handicapped individuals has increased and continues to do so every year.

Legislation Guarantees Handicapped Individuals An Equal Chance

The right to a free, appropriate education for everyone is recognized by society and quaranteed by federal and state laws. The United States Constitution delegates the responsibility for providing a system of public education to the individual states as they see fit. All fifty states have a public school system created by their legislatures from this power, and all contain provisions for the education of handicapped individuals.

This does not mean that there is a nationwide agreement on the best way to deliver services to handicapped learners. The provisions for educational programs vary greatly from one state to another. Some have affirmative, aggressive policies to insure education for everyone; while others have a more permissive legislation that allows laws to be construed in a way that handicapped pupils receive an inadequate education.

To help you understand the scope of the laws, and how they benefit handicapped people, we have briefly described some of the most important pieces of legislation.

The Vocational Amendments of 1968

Public Law 90-576, also called the Vocational Amendments of 1968, addresses the special needs of handicapped students. The law provides for appropriate vocational education programs for handicapped learners by requiring that at least ten percent of the funds given to states for vocational education be spent on programs specifically designed for handicapped persons.

In addition to setting aside funds for special programs, the law demands greater efforts be made to coordinate agencies and services for handicapped pupils. The law encourages vocational education, special education, and vocational rehabilitation to work as a team to meet the needs of handicapped learners.

The Vocational Amendments of 1968 make special provisions for handicapped students who must be educated apart from their normal peers because of the nature or severity of their condition. While there is a definite need for segregated classes in cases where children cannot be handled effectively in the regular classroom, this placement should be used only when absolutely necessary if handicapped people are to assume normal roles. Placing a child in a class segregated from normal youngsters has recently come under investigation by the education profession and the courts. This is because the alternative of moving students to separate classes for special education has either been ignored in instances where there was a great need for extra assistance, or has been blatantly violated in other cases where children with enormous ability and potential have been held back.

The Education For All Children Act

The most recent piece of legislation influencing the education of handicapped children is Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1976. The act states as its purpose, "...To assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free, appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs, to assure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents are protected, to assist state and localities to provide for education of all handicapped children, and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children."

The far-reaching effects of the law will have an impact on every classroom and school system. Because vocational educators will be affected significantly, it is important that the terms be thoroughly understood.

The law gives each school the task of emphasizing special education. The basic definition of special education is specially designed instruction. The way the instruction is distributed is being strongly debated and will change the most as the full impact of the law is realized. Specialized instruction can be administered many different ways. Teaching can be done in residential institutions and self-contained classes or in the regular school system with trained special instructors working right along with the children. Special education can also be received in the regular classroom if simple changes are made to aid students with handicaps.

The law also demands that an Individualized Education Program, IEP, be developed for each pupil to design the best educational route with his specific abilities, interests, and goals in mind. The IEP is a written statement by representatives from the local education agency, the student's parents, and the student himself that evaluates pre-vocational and vocational skills the pupil has developed through training. After the information is processed, specific short-term goals and future plans for the student can be made.

Another condition of the law is that handicapped individuals receive their education in the least restrictive environment, which in most schools is the classroom. The law

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requires that institutions receiving federal funds guarantee, "...to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped." According to the law, the only acceptable reason for segregating a child in a special classroom is if the degree or nature of the child's handicap inhibits participation in the regular classroom setting.

Title II of Public Law 94-482

Title II of Public Law 94-482 has an impact on the vocational education program by emphasizing non-discriminatory career development for all vocational eduation students regardless of age, sex, race, or handicapping condition. The law focuses on using all the available resources within the school to design realistic vocational training programs suited to the special needs and interests of students. Title II calls for the appointment of a guidance representative to the state and national Vocational Advisory Councils to make certain career guidance is an integral part of vocational education. Effective career guidance should bring students into contact with all kinds of workers and occupational experiences to help them determine their own career objectives. The goal of the law is to improve guidance in vocational education programs.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, PL 93-112, encompasses a range of situations relating to handicapped people with implications for educators, employers, and every member of the community. Two sections are of particular importance to vocational education teachers. The first is section 504 which forbids discrimination against any qualified person on the basis of a handicap. The law covers any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance and is essentially the first civil rights law protecting handicapped people.

Section 504 is consistent with previous legislation by requiring education for handicapped persons in the least restrictive environment. Placement decisions about the best setting are to be made by professionals based on several sources of information. Aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, and the student's physical condition are evaluated with his social background and adaptive behavior to reach the decision. This procedure is necessary by law to insure that the educational needs of handicapped students are met as adequately as those of non-handicapped students.

In accordance with section 504, vocational education classes may not limit the number of handicapped students who are qualified for enrollment. Admission requirements may not include testing procedures which discriminate

against handicapped persons in general, or against a particular type of handicap.

To assure handicapped students of an equal opportunity, the law says that the physical setting of the classes must be accessible to the handicapped students enrolled in them. For instance, if a vocational education classroom is on the third floor of the building and it is impossible to get a wheelchair to that floor, then the classroom facility must be moved to a different location. Facilities used inside the class must be accessible to all students enrolled in the class, or modified until they are.

Vocational educators responsible for the training and placement of handicapped individuals in jobs should be aware that section 504 applies the same non-discriminatory rules to employers as well. A qualified job applicant cannot be discriminated against because of a handicap. People with handicaps are entitled to the same benefits and

services that other employees receive. There must be no bias in job assignment, compensation benefits, salary, or promotional considerations.

To put these requirements into practice, the law requires that new buildings meet certain standards to make them accessible to handicapped people. Existing structures are required to be remodeled only when there is a specific need for a handicapped person to get into the building. A handicapped job applicant cannot be denied a job because the employer's facilities are inaccessible. In cases like this, the employer is required by law to make reasonable accommodations for the handicapped individual so he can apply for the job and compete on an equal basis with the other applicants.

Employers are not permitted to make inquiries about the nature and severity of a handicap. They may only ask questions about an applicant's ability to do the job in question. Once the handicapped person is hired, the employer must make every effort to see that he is allowed to function in the mainstream of the job setting.

These laws serve as a start to bring handicapped individuals into the mainstream of American life, offering them the same opportunities as any citizen, and helping them secure futures as self-reliant members of society.

Responsibility

Though handicapped students have been given the right of a free, appropriate education, the privilege is meaningless without a system to deliver educational programs. Four levels of responsibility work together to coordinate the needs of handicapped learners into systems that can help them the most. They are the federal and state governments, local education agencies, and individual communities themselves.

The federal government is in charge of monitoring the education programs. Though federal monitoring is sometimes viewed as bureaucratic "red tape" or the "strings attached" to funds, the need for it is unquestionable. However, the extent that required procedures affect our educational programs needs to be reviewed from time to time. Governmental assistance with overly stringent rules and regulations impedes progress and works against efforts for improvement.

The state government plays a larger, more direct role in the education of handicapped learners. The funding and guidance of public school programs is the responsibility of the state governments. After reviewing plans submitted by local education agencies, funds are set aside for a broad range of programs to help handicapped pupils throughout the state.

Community involvement has a vital role in helping the handicapped individual make strides towards a better, normal, life. Often the community's role is overlooked, especially in the area of vocational education where input from the community is indispensable. Most handicapped students in vocational education programs will be working in the community after they finish their training. Active participation and encouragement by people in the community is necessary for them to succeed at their jobs and in their new roles in society. Continuing community concern is a right handicapped people deserve and a responsibility every citizen should accept.

Normalization and Risk-Taking

The impact of legislation and growing public concern have brought two other terms into view, normalization and risk-taking. Normalization takes into account basic human rights in directing programming. Many implications of the principle are directly important to the vocational education of handicapped learners.

The principle stresses that socialization and impressions of life should be gained through contacts with a normal society rather than one that is not, such as an institution solely for handicapped children. Mainstreaming in the school system is a prime example of the normalization principle in dealing with handicapped individuals.

Along with the idea of normalization, the concept of "dignity of risk" should have a place in the curriculum for handicapped students. There is a basic human dignity that develops from taking risks that is denied handicapped persons when they are over-protected. Handicapped students should be allowed to explore, learn, and face the same experiences as their normal peers.

This attitude is necessary for successful education of handicapped learners in the regular vocational classroom. The provision for normal risk-taking can be accomplished if only necessary, minimal, modifications in the teaching approach and environment are made. Over-compensation for the needs of handicapped students restricts their potential instead of normalizing and increasing their ability.

A Conceptual Model of Mainstreaming

There is no single definition of mainstreaming that covers the full scope of the principle. Simply stated, mainstreaming is the integration of physically and mentally handicapped children into the regular classroom. To be beneficial, placement into appropriate settings must be individually determined and reviewed regularly. Mainstreaming requires the cooperation and involvement of many different groups in the school system. There is no specific mainstreaming approach that will work for every student so the working concept must offer alternatives with a series of progressive levels to meet the diverse needs of handicapped pupils.

Hierarchy of Services for Special Education Programs*

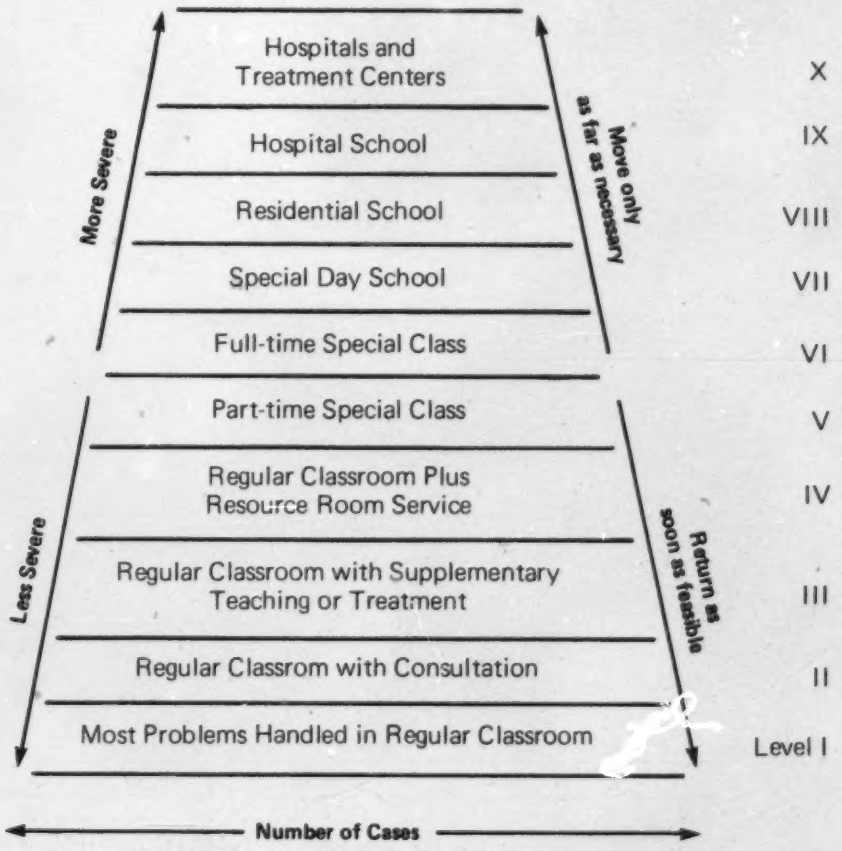

Figure 1

*Adapted from M. C. Reynolds, "A Framework for Considering Some Issues in Special Education" in the March, 1962, issue of *Exceptional Children* (Ex: Kirk).

This conceptual model shows how mainstreaming can be instituted in the school program. The alternatives of the mainstreaming model open many doors to handicapped children. In the past, the practice was to place a handicapped child in a special self-contained class when failure resulted in the regular classroom. This conceptual model illustrates a more effective delivery system of educational services to children with special needs.

The system is flexible, encouraging placement in the least restrictive environment. The goal of the mainstreaming model is to place as many children as possible in the two lower levels. However, this is never done unless it has been determined that the level will meet the student's needs to the fullest so he will make the greatest progress.

In the model, regular vocational education teachers serve a substantial number of handicapped individuals in levels one through five. Level I contains students with mild handicaps and no support services who are taught in the regular classroom. At levels II and III, handicapped pupils are filtered into the program to receive education from regular vocational educators with supplementary services, specially trained personnel, and modifications in the regular curriculum. For children in level IV, the vocational educator is assisted by special education teachers and resource room facilities. The resource room offers a special education teacher and specially designed learning materials to help teach handicapped children. The part-time special class placement at level V calls for a special education teacher to instruct students part of the day in a special class. This placement reinforces learning activities in the regular vocational classroom and should not be isolated from the regular curriculum.

The programs represented in levels five through ten are outside the range of regular education and do not require the services of regular vocational education teachers. The critical point to understand is that this model calls for movement within the system, upward from one level to the next when necessary, and downward to the next lower level as rapidly as possible. Because the goal is for downward movement, it is important that the vocational educator have knowledge of programs in levels six through ten to accommodate those individuals who may have previously been taught outside the regular education system, but are now being mainstreamed into it.

Mainstreaming

To summarize, here is a checklist of what is important to know about mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming:

—provides the most appropriate education for each child in the least restrictive setting.

—focuses on the educational needs of all children instead of placing handicapped children in special schools or self-

contained environments simply because they have been labeled mentally retarded or visually impaired.

—creates alternatives that will help teachers serve children with learning or adjustment problems in the regular setting.

—uses special education teachers, methods and materials specialists, and resource room teachers, to offer handicapped children the extra help they may need.

—unites the skills of general education and special education so that all children may have equal educational opportunity.

Mainstreaming does not:

—advocate the return of all handicapped children in special classes to regular classes.

—permit children with special needs to remain in regular classrooms without the support services that they need.

—ignore some children's needs for a more specialized program than can be provided in the general education program.

—cost less than serving children in special self-contained classrooms.

The outcomes of handicapped pupils who are integrated or mainstreamed into the regular vocational education program differ only slightly from those of non-handicapped individuals. Through a system that provides an appropriate education, handicapped learners will achieve the goals sought by all students—finding suitable employment, becoming self-reliant, and obtaining economic independence.

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Answers: 1) F 2) T 3) T 4) F 5) T 6) F 7) T 8) T 9) T 10) F

This public document was promulgated at a cost of $.82 per copy to provide information for vocational education teachers dealing with handicapped students.